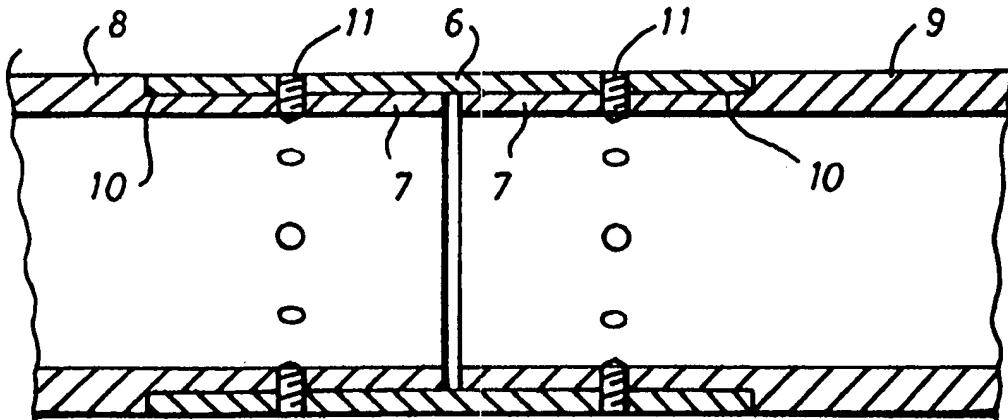




INTERNATIONAL APPLICATION PUBLISHED UNDER THE PATENT COOPERATION TREATY (PCT)

| | | | |
|---|--|----|--|
| (51) International Patent Classification ⁶ : E21B 17/08, 43/10, 43/08, F16L 13/14 | | A1 | (11) International Publication Number: WO 98/22690 |
| | | | (43) International Publication Date: 28 May 1998 (28.05.98) |
| (21) International Application Number: PCT/EP97/06671 | | | (81) Designated States: AL, AM, AT, AU, AZ, BA, BB, BG, BR, BY, CA, CH, CN, CU, CZ, DE, DK, EE, ES, FI, GB, GE, GH, HU, ID, IL, IS, JP, KE, KG, KP, KR, KZ, LC, LK, LR, LS, LT, LU, LV, MD, MG, MK, MN, MW, MX, NO, NZ, PL, PT, RO, RU, SD, SE, SG, SI, SK, SL, TJ, TM, TR, TT, UA, UG, UZ, VN, YU, ZW, ARIPO patent (GH, KE, LS, MW, SD, SZ, UG, ZW), Eurasian patent (AM, AZ, BY, KG, KZ, MD, RU, TJ, TM), European patent (AT, BE, CH, DE, DK, ES, FI, FR, GB, GR, IE, IT, LU, MC, NL, PT, SE), OAPI patent (BF, BJ, CF, CG, CI, CM, GA, GN, ML, MR, NE, SN, TD, TG). |
| (22) International Filing Date: 21 November 1997 (21.11.97) | | | |
| (30) Priority Data: 96203272.8 22 November 1996 (22.11.96) EP (34) Countries for which the regional or international application was filed: GB et al. | | | |
| (71) Applicant (for all designated States except CA): SHELL INTERNATIONALE RESEARCH MAATSCHAPPIJ B.V. [NL/NL]; Carel van Bylandtlaan 30, NL-2596 HR The Hague (NL). | | | |
| (71) Applicant (for CA only): SHELL CANADA LIMITED [CA/CA]; 400 - 4th Avenue, S.W., Calgary, Alberta T2P 2H5 (CA). | | | |
| (72) Inventor: LOHBECK, Wilhelmus, Christianus, Maria; Volmerlaan 6, NL-2288 GD Rijswijk (NL). | | | |

(54) Title: CONNECTOR FOR AN EXPANDABLE TUBING STRING



(57) Abstract

A connector for interconnecting a pair of adjacent sections (8 and 9) of an expandable tubing string comprises a plastically expandable sleeve (6) that is arranged co-axially around or inside the ends (7) of the interconnected tubing sections (8 and 9) and a series of circumferentially spaced mechanical fasteners (5), such as screws or rivets, for fastening the sleeve to each of said ends (7).

FOR THE PURPOSES OF INFORMATION ONLY

Codes used to identify States party to the PCT on the front pages of pamphlets publishing international applications under the PCT.

| | | | | | | | |
|----|--------------------------|----|---------------------------------------|----|---|----|--------------------------|
| AL | Albania | ES | Spain | LS | Lesotho | SI | Slovenia |
| AM | Armenia | FI | Finland | LT | Lithuania | SK | Slovakia |
| AT | Austria | FR | France | LU | Luxembourg | SN | Senegal |
| AU | Australia | GA | Gabon | LV | Latvia | SZ | Swaziland |
| AZ | Azerbaijan | GB | United Kingdom | MC | Monaco | TD | Chad |
| BA | Bosnia and Herzegovina | GE | Georgia | MD | Republic of Moldova | TG | Togo |
| BB | Barbados | GH | Ghana | MG | Madagascar | TJ | Tajikistan |
| BE | Belgium | GN | Guinea | MK | The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia | TM | Turkmenistan |
| BF | Burkina Faso | GR | Greece | ML | Mali | TR | Turkey |
| BG | Bulgaria | HU | Hungary | MN | Mongolia | TT | Trinidad and Tobago |
| BJ | Benin | IE | Ireland | MR | Mauritania | UA | Ukraine |
| BR | Brazil | IL | Israel | MW | Malawi | UG | Uganda |
| BY | Belarus | IS | Iceland | MX | Mexico | US | United States of America |
| CA | Canada | IT | Italy | NE | Niger | UZ | Uzbekistan |
| CF | Central African Republic | JP | Japan | NL | Netherlands | VN | Viet Nam |
| CG | Congo | KE | Kenya | NO | Norway | YU | Yugoslavia |
| CH | Switzerland | KG | Kyrgyzstan | NZ | New Zealand | ZW | Zimbabwe |
| CI | Côte d'Ivoire | KP | Democratic People's Republic of Korea | PL | Poland | | |
| CM | Cameroon | KR | Republic of Korea | PT | Portugal | | |
| CN | China | KZ | Kazakhstan | RO | Romania | | |
| CU | Cuba | LC | Saint Lucia | RU | Russian Federation | | |
| CZ | Czech Republic | LI | Liechtenstein | SD | Sudan | | |
| DE | Germany | LK | Sri Lanka | SE | Sweden | | |
| DK | Denmark | LR | Liberia | SG | Singapore | | |
| EE | Estonia | | | | | | |

CONNECTOR FOR AN EXPANDABLE TUBING STRING

The invention relates to a connector for use in connecting sections of an expandable tubing string, and in particular but not exclusively for use in the connection of sections of an expandable slotted tubing 5 (EST) string as utilized in downhole applications in oil and gas production operations.

Expandable slotted tubings are known from International patent application No. PCT/EP 93/01460. This prior art reference discloses a slotted tube which may 10 be expanded downhole by running an expansion mandrel through the tubing whereby the slots are expanded to diamond-shaped apertures.

When a tubing is expanded it is desirable that this 15 can be accomplished by a substantially uniform expansion force, also at the locations where adjacent tubing sections are interconnected.

It is therefore an object of the present invention 20 to provide a connector for an expandable tubing that can be expanded smoothly and made up easily without requiring welding operations.

The connector according to the invention thereto 25 comprises a plastically expandable sleeve that is in use arranged co-axially relative to an end of each of the adjacent tubing sections, and means for fastening the sleeve to said ends.

Preferably the outer surface of an end of each of the adjacent tubing sections has been machined away to form an annular recess in which the sleeve is located.

- 2 -

Alternatively the inner surface of an end of each of the adjacent tubing sections has been machined away to form an annular recess in which the sleeve is located.

5 It is preferred that the thickness of the sleeve is substantially equal to the depth of the annular recess so that a flush-type connection is created.

10 It is furthermore preferred that the fastening means comprise a series of circumferentially spaced screws that pass through holes that are drilled through the sleeve and the adjacent wall of ends of the adjacent tubing sections. If desired the screws may be replaced by rivets or other mechanical fasteners.

15 The connector according to the invention is particularly attractive for interconnecting sections of an expandable string of oil and/or gas well tubulars that may be slotted. If the connector is used for interconnecting sections of an expandable slotted tubing string then the sleeve is provided with a series 20 of staggered substantially longitudinal slots which are deformable into diamond-shaped apertures upon expansion of the sleeve.

25 Further aspects, details, objects and advantages of the connector according to the invention will become apparent from the accompanying claims, abstract, drawings and detailed description with reference to the drawings.

30 The invention will now be described in more detail with reference to the accompanying drawings, in which

Fig. 1 shows a schematic side view of a plastically expandable connector according to the invention which surrounds ends of adjacent expandable slotted tubing sections;

- 3 -

Fig. 2 shows a schematic longitudinal sectional view of a flush-type connector according to the invention which surrounds ends of adjacent expandable tubing sections; and

5 Fig. 3 shows a schematic longitudinal sectional view of a flush-type connector according to the invention which is surrounded by ends of adjacent expandable tubing sections.

Referring now to Fig. 1, there is shown a connector 10 comprising a plastically deformable slotted sleeve 1 that co-axially surrounds ends of a pair of adjacent slotted tubing sections 2 and 3. The sleeve 1 and tubing sections are each provided with a series of 15 staggered and partially overlapping slots 4 that deform to substantially diamond shaped apertures (not shown) upon expansion of the assembly by e.g. running an expansion mandrel (not shown) through the interior of the tubing sections 2 and 3.

One or more series of circumferentially spaced 20 Allen-type or other locking screws 5 fasten the sleeve 1 to each of the tubing sections 2 and 3 such that the inner surface of the sleeve 1 engages the outer surface of the end of each tubing section 2 and 3 both before, during and after the expansion process. The screws 5 25 are located in nodes between slots 4.

Referring now to Fig. 2 there is shown a flush-type connector comprising a plastically deformable solid or slotted sleeve 6 that surrounds ends 7 of adjacent solid or slotted tubing sections 8 and 9, which ends 7 30 have been machined away to form an annular recess 10 in which the sleeve 6 is located. The thickness of the sleeve 6 substantially equals the depth of the recess 10 to form a flush-type connector.

- 4 -

The connector furthermore comprises a series of circumferentially spaced Allen-type or other locking screws 11 to fasten the sleeve 6 to each of the tubing sections 8 and 9 such that the inner surface of the sleeve 6 engages the outer surface of the ends 7 of the adjacent tubing sections 8 and 9 both before, during and after the expansion process.

Referring now to Figure 3 there is shown a flush-type connector comprising a plastically deformable solid or slotted sleeve 16 that is surrounded by ends 17 of adjacent solid or slotted tubing sections 18 and 19, respectively, which ends 17 have been machined away to form an annular recess 20 in which the sleeve 16 is located. The thickness of the sleeve substantially equals the depth of the recess 20 to form a flush-type connector that smoothly deforms plastically together with the ends of the tubing sections 18 and 19 during the expansion process.

The connector of Fig. 3 furthermore comprises a series of circumferentially spaced Allen-type locking screws 21 to fasten the sleeve 16 to each of the tubing sections 18 and 19 such that the outer surface of the sleeve 16 firmly engages the inner surface of the ends 17 of the adjacent tubing sections 8 and 9 both before, during and after the expansion process.

C L A I M S

1. A connector for interconnecting adjacent sections of a tubing string, the connector comprising a sleeve that is in use arranged co-axially relative to an end of each of the adjacent tubing sections, and means for fastening the sleeve to said ends, characterized in that the sleeve is plastically expandable and is useable for interconnecting sections of an expandable tubing string.
5. 2. The connector of claim 1, wherein the sleeve is designed for interconnecting sections of an expandable slotted tubing string and is provided with a series of staggered substantially longitudinal slots which are deformable into diamond-shaped apertures upon expansion of the sleeve.
10. 3. The connector of claim 1, wherein the sleeve is designed for interconnecting sections of an expandable string of oil and/or gas well tubulars.
15. 4. The connector of claim 1, wherein the outer surface of an end of each of the adjacent tubing sections has been machined away to form an annular recess in which the sleeve is located.
20. 5. The connector of claim 1, wherein the inner surface of an end of each of the adjacent tubing sections has been machined away to form an annular recess in which the sleeve is located.
25. 6. The connector of claim 4 or 5, wherein the thickness of the sleeve is substantially equal to the depth of the annular recess.

- 6 -

7. The connector of any preceding claim, wherein the fastening means comprise a series of circumferentially spaced screws that pass through holes that are drilled through the sleeve and the adjacent wall of ends of the 5 adjacent tubing sections.

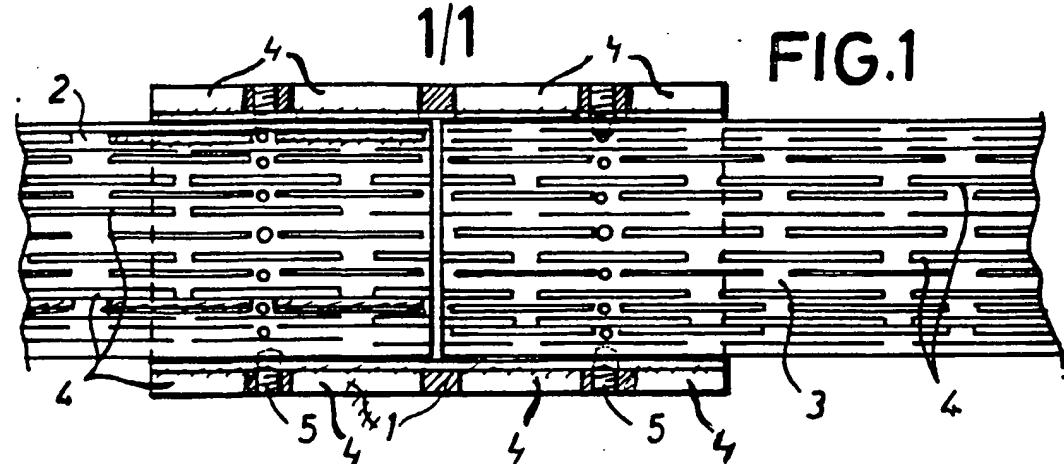


FIG.2

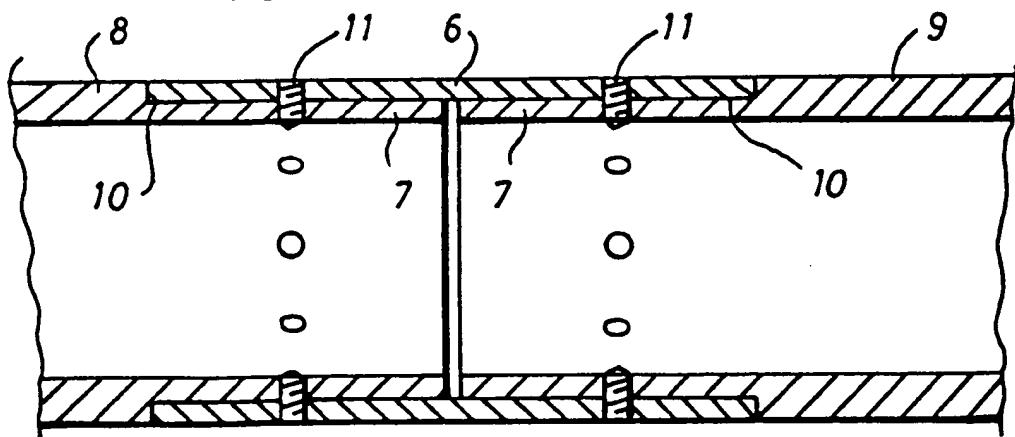
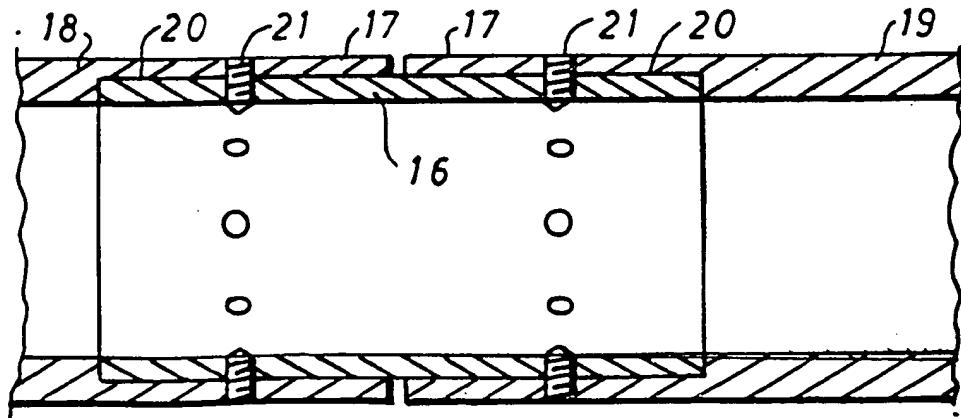


FIG.3



INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

Int. .ional Application No

PCT/EP 97/06671

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER
 IPC 6 E21B17/08 E21B43/10 E21B43/08 F16L13/14

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)

IPC 6 E21B F16L

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practical, search terms used)

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

| Category | Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages | Relevant to claim No. |
|----------|--|-----------------------|
| X | US 3 948 321 A (OWEN) 6 April 1976 see column 5, line 13 - line 50 see column 7, line 37 - line 41 | 1,3-6 |
| Y | --- | 2 |
| Y | US 5 366 012 A (LOHBECK) 22 November 1994 cited in the application see the whole document --- | 2 |
| X | US 3 863 959 A (BLASCHKE) 4 February 1975 see abstract --- | 1,3-7 |
| X | DE 24 34 298 A (HERMANN VON RAUTENKRANZ INTERNATIONALE TIEFBOHR KG ITAG) 29 January 1976 see page 4, line 9 - page 5, line 6 --- | 1,3-7 |
| | | -/- |

Further documents are listed in the continuation of box C.

Patent family members are listed in annex.

* Special categories of cited documents :

- "A" document defining the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance
- "E" earlier document but published on or after the international filing date
- "L" document which may throw doubts on priority claim(s) or which is cited to establish the publication date of another citation or other special reason (as specified)
- "O" document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means
- "P" document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed

"T" later document published after the international filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the invention

"X" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is taken alone

"Y" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such documents, such combination being obvious to a person skilled in the art.

"&" document member of the same patent family

1

Date of the actual completion of the international search

24 March 1998

Date of mailing of the international search report

30/03/1998

Name and mailing address of the ISA

European Patent Office, P.B. 5818 Patentlaan 2
NL - 2280 HV Rijswijk
Tel. (+31-70) 340-2040, Tx. 31 651 epo nl.
Fax: (+31-70) 340-3016

Authorized officer

Sogno, M

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International Application No

PCT/EP 97/06671

| C.(Continuation) DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT | | |
|--|---|-----------------------|
| Category | Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages | Relevant to claim No. |
| X | WO 95 25239 A (ATLAS COPCO GEOTECHNICAL DRILLING AB) 21 September 1995 see abstract ---- | 1,3-5 |
| X | US 2 871 034 A (WILTSE) 27 January 1959 see column 1, line 59 - column 2, line 4 ---- | 1,3,5,6 |
| X | GB 792 886 A (HUNTSINGER) 2 April 1958 see page 3, line 116 - line 124; figures 4,9,11 ---- | 1,3,4,7 |
| X | US 3 585 803 A (BARDGETTE) 22 June 1971 see column 2, line 71 - column 3, line 1 ---- | 1,3,4,7 |
| X | DE 90 13 606 U (BRM GMBH) 31 October 1991 see the whole document ---- | 1,3,7 |
| X | FR 1 565 562 A (RABUEL) 2 May 1969 see page 2, left-hand column, line 10 - right-hand column, line 4 ---- | 1,3 |
| X | DE 41 33 802 C (HAWERKAMP) 22 October 1992 see the whole document ---- | 1,3 |
| X | WO 93 14284 A (WELAND AB) 22 July 1993 see page 4, line 4 - line 6 see page 5, line 6 - line 21 ---- | 1,7 |
| X | DE 295 18 333 U (NOVOPRESS GMBH) 11 January 1996 see page 5, line 21 - line 26; figure 2 ---- | 1 |
| X | EP 0 611 614 A (B & W FUEL COMPANY) 24 August 1994 see abstract ---- | 1 |
| X | DE 43 29 442 A (DEUTSCHE ALWA GMBH) 2 March 1995 see abstract ---- | 1 |
| P,X | WO 96 37680 A (SHELL INTERNATIONALE RESEARCH MAATSCHAPPIJ) 28 November 1996 see example 1 see page 2, line 23 - line 28 see page 3, line 19 - line 25 see page 4, line 14 - line 17 ---- | 1-7 |
| P,X | WO 96 37681 A (PETROLINE WIRELINE SERVICES LIMITED) 28 November 1996 see the whole document ---- | 1-7 |
| | | -/- |

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

Int. Application No

PCT/EP 97/06671

C.(Continuation) DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

| Category | Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages | Relevant to claim No. |
|----------|--|-----------------------|
| X,P | WO 97 41377 A (B.D.KENDLE ENGINEERINGLIMITED) 6 November 1997 see page 13, line 6 - line 9; figure 15 see page 7, line 19 - line 21; figure 6 see page 10, line 1 - line 3 ----- | 1,3-6 |

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

Information on patent family members

International Application No

PCT/EP 97/06671

| Patent document cited in search report | Publication date | Patent family member(s) | | Publication date |
|--|------------------|-------------------------|--|------------------|
| US 3948321 A | 06-04-76 | NONE | | |
| US 5366012 A | 22-11-94 | AU 672008 B | | 19-09-96 |
| | | AU 4324593 A | | 04-01-94 |
| | | CA 2137565 A | | 23-12-93 |
| | | DE 69305852 D | | 12-12-96 |
| | | DE 69305852 T | | 22-05-97 |
| | | WO 9325800 A | | 23-12-93 |
| | | EP 0643795 A | | 22-03-95 |
| | | JP 7507611 T | | 24-08-95 |
| | | MD 960219 A | | 31-05-97 |
| | | NO 944746 A | | 03-02-95 |
| | | NZ 253125 A | | 27-02-96 |
| US 3863959 A | 04-02-75 | CH 558872 A | | 14-02-75 |
| | | DE 2210980 A | | 23-08-73 |
| | | FR 2175229 A | | 19-10-73 |
| | | GB 1365657 A | | 04-09-74 |
| | | JP 48101614 A | | 21-12-73 |
| DE 2434298 A | 29-01-76 | NONE | | |
| WO 9525239 A | 21-09-95 | SE 503459 C | | 17-06-96 |
| | | AU 680753 B | | 07-08-97 |
| | | AU 2089095 A | | 03-10-95 |
| | | EP 0757768 A | | 12-02-97 |
| | | FI 963641 A | | 08-11-96 |
| | | NO 963833 A | | 25-10-96 |
| | | SE 9400867 A | | 16-09-95 |
| US 2871034 A | 27-01-59 | NONE | | |
| GB 792886 A | | NONE | | |
| US 3585803 A | 22-06-71 | NONE | | |
| DE 9013606 U | 31-10-91 | NONE | | |
| FR 1565562 A | 02-05-69 | NONE | | |

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

Information on patent family members

International Application No

PCT/EP 97/06671

| Patent document cited in search report | Publication date | Patent family member(s) | Publication date |
|--|------------------|--|--|
| DE 4133802 C | 22-10-92 | NONE | |
| WO 9314284 A | 22-07-93 | SE 500185 C AT 154964 T DE 69220677 D DE 69220677 T EP 0624219 A FI 943449 A NO 942659 A, B, SE 9200179 A | 02-05-94 15-07-97 07-08-97 15-01-98 17-11-94 20-07-94 15-07-92 22-07-93 |
| DE 29518333 U | 11-01-96 | NONE | |
| EP 611614 A | 24-08-94 | WO 9419125 A | 01-09-94 |
| DE 4329442 A | 02-03-95 | NONE | |
| WO 9637680 A | 28-11-96 | AU 5826596 A AU 7349396 A EP 0828918 A EP 0824628 A WO 9637681 A NO 975350 A | 11-12-96 11-12-96 18-03-98 25-02-98 28-11-96 16-01-98 |
| WO 9637681 A | 28-11-96 | AU 5826596 A AU 7349396 A WO 9637680 A EP 0828918 A EP 0824628 A NO 975350 A | 11-12-96 11-12-96 28-11-96 18-03-98 25-02-98 16-01-98 |
| WO 9741377 A | 06-11-97 | AU 2647497 A | 19-11-97 |